

Barney Glazer's Glazed Bits



JACK WARNER

HOLLYWOOD, Calif. - When the Friars Club Charity Foundation recently staged its testimonial charity dinner at the Beverly Hilton Hotel honoring Jack L. Warner, head of Warner Bros. Studio, little did the assembled guests dream that they would witness one of the most bizarre evenings in the history of the entertainment world.

After George Jessel, Frank Sinatra, Jack Benny, George Burns, Dean Martin, Harry Karl and Allan Sherman had unloosed their big guns at the target for the evening, guests came away from the International Ballroom shaking their heads in disbelief.

The slaughter proved devastatingly complete but the victim emerged victorious.

Never before had the assembly witnessed the honored head of a major film studio, especially one who only recently had garnered many Oscar honors with his "My Fair Lady" achievement,

receive the full brunt of so thorough a roasting by the crown heads of comedy and insult.

But through it all, he refuses to be stilled. In the end, his attackers had run out of gas but he was still primed for bear.

Many in a huge audience who had never heard "the other side" of Jack L. Warner finally got their chance and couldn't believe their ears. They were familiar with the business tycoon who runs his massive studio with a firm and knowledgeable hand. But the gliv-tongued fellow who drew on Joe Miller's joke book and gabbed on and on shook them to their teeth.

To this moment, they can't bring the respected business leader into focus with the loquacious joker who chatted with himself in undertones and switched to loud and running-at-the-mouth meditations that in the early days of vaudeville would have quickly brought out the hook.

Jack Benny listened as long as he could, grabbed a bottle of booze, shouted, "I never drank before in my life," put the bottle to his mouth and downed a long shot. Not to be outdone, Warner promptly drank a toast to himself.

In a quick move, George Jessel arose and sang "Sweet Adeline" in a voice known to stop trains and wars but with no effect whatsoever on Warner's filibuster. Dean Martin poured champagne over his own head to put out the fires that were raging within. Frank Sinatra pleaded with Warner to sit down. George Burns poured



DEBBIE REYNOLDS, NOW STARRING AT RIVIERA

all the honey in his voice begging the studio head to relinquish the microphone.

Only Debbie Reynolds sided with Warner. She yelled at Jessel, "Shut up!" but Debbie's husband, Harry Karl, who is president of the Friars Club, groaned, "I hope I'm assassinated before my term expires."

But Warner - he kept telling one globby joke after another until the guests were holding their sides from the pain of laughter. They weren't laughing at the jokes. It was the man. More appropriately, it was "the other man."

Just when it appeared that Warner had mercifully run out of material, he started it all over again with, "Wait till you hear my next line. This will kill you."

There were many who hoped it would. They were sure they couldn't take any more.

Not even George Jessel was safe on this wild evening. Before working over Warner, Benny drew his sights on Jessel, accusing the Friars' toastmaster of repeatedly talking about the "halcyon days of Caruso and Sam Spiegel."

"I looked up halcyon in the dictionary," said Jack, "and it means a bird usually identified with a kingfisher."

Harry Golden's "Only In America"

OUR STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY

The reproach I address to the principle of equality is not that it leads men away in the pursuit of forbidden enjoyments, but that it absorbs them wholly in quest of those which are allowed. By these means a kind of virtuous materialism may ultimately be established in the world, which would not corrupt, but enervate the soul and noiselessly unbend its springs of action."

These are the sentiments of Alexis de Tocqueville writing about America in the year 1840. The book, of course, is Vol. II of his classic "Democracy in America," the first philosophy ever conceived about an equalitarian and democratic society.

De Tocqueville was a young Frenchman who came to America in 1830 with a companion, Mons. Beaumont, despatched by their government to study our prison system. Nine months later de Tocqueville returned to France and began work on what has since become an almost timeless study, always relevant.

The passage above struck me as absolutely true. All of us want to keep up with the Joneses, each of us sure that the Joneses will never go too far.

Yet our souls have not become "noiselessly unbended" though indeed many moralists have pointed out this probability.

There are, I believe, three reasons why Americans have not collapsed in a quest for permissible pleasures.

De Tocqueville would have written a completely different paragraph had he known that this new equalitarian society would soon include an innovation never before experienced by any nation, aristocracy, dictatorship, or monarchy. That innovation was the unprecedented immigration policy which admitted millions of aliens to America between the years 1840 to 1920, 50 millions from 70 different countries.

Though we are an equalitarian society, we were a society with "strangers" always within the gates. And after the strangers were assimilated, still more strangers followed. By and large other nations are homogenous, its citizenry roughly alike. Our American South has been a homogenous area, there has been no foreign immigration to speak of, and all America might have resembled it. Which is to say, all America might have been as unfortunately torpid as the South has been on occasion. But in 1830 de Tocqueville did not see the beginnings of the immigrant tradition.

A second reason we have not really succumbed to the blandishments of equality is that we have never achieved universal equality.

Thirty years after de Tocqueville departed our shores for France, we fought a Civil War to abolish slavery. Seventy years after that, we went to Europe to make the world safe for democracy and 20 years later simply to make it safe. In between we initiated a New Deal. Twenty years after World War II, we are in the throes of an equalitarian revolution waged by the American Negro for his rights and the Federal Government and much of the country have started a war to eradicate poverty. In America equality is not a principle to live by but a cause to fight for.

The third reason our springs of action are still resilient is that equality is not our sole motivating force. It is true that we may not be as free as we are equal, or as free as we are materialistic, but freedom and liberty still are more than American catchwords. We fought for liberty in 1776 and since that date our heroes have been those who always championed individual freedom.

De Tocqueville himself was to remark on this, saying that men can be absolutely equal in a slave state but that does not make them absolutely happy. In a democracy, equality is often a principle of law not an empirical fact.

Junior Choir will take the Bemah May 14th, the same night that Rabbi Gold will announce the winners of the Passover essays from the religious school. On that occasion Paul Kleinman will be honored with the "Nehr Tamid", the highest award any Jewish Boy Scout can achieve.

HEARD MUSIC IS SWEET
There are perhaps some 10,000 books in my home and office. As happens in the life of many a bibliophile, however, there those moments when there is nothing to read. I fall to thinking then of the books that I would like to read that will never be written.

Who would not like to read Winston Churchill's book on Franklin D. Roosevelt? Only Churchill's eulogy survives of this idea.

Nothing thrills me like the fantasy of being an editor with the power to commission those books we shall never read. I would like to have read John F. Kennedy's story about his Administration. And I would like to have read Abraham Lincoln's autobiography.

If I had had anything to say about it, John Milton would have written a novel for me and so would T.S. Eliot. I think a book about the Negro Social revolution by William Faulkner would have been as instructive as any written. I have always felt that up until he won the Nobel Prize Faulkner's novels were a powerful literary force. After he won the Prize, along with the acclaim, he began to apologize in his later books for all the ideas he had stated in his earlier ones. He had had a change of heart about the South. His change of heart weakened his literature but that change might have made him a great and human essayist.

I dream, too, of the kind of painting El Greco might have done in a portrait of a Spanish Inquisitor. What rudely interrupts these reveries is the notion of the books which will inevitably be written which I cannot bring myself to read. I am sure Christine Keeler of Profumo Case fame will write a book called "No Better than She Should Be."

Some years from now we are bound to be subjected to Billy Sol Estes' "They Know Not What They Do" and Madame Nu ought to be shipping in with something called "A New Slant." A sure bet for the best seller lists is Barry Goldwater's "The Insuperable Task" and, in fact, I could virtually write the criticism the "National Review" will undertake. I can see William Buckley touching the pencil to his tongue to begin, "If Barry Goldwater proved an unsuccessful politician, he has not proved an unsuccessful thinker...."

Even now I suspect some editorial ghost is helping Eugene "Bull" Connor compose some touching memoirs of his years in Birmingham like "In Defense of God." But the most interesting book of all would be a candid autobiography of Anastas Mikoyen: "How I Got Promoted Under Lenin, Stalin, Malenkov, Beria, Krushchev, and Kosygin."

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